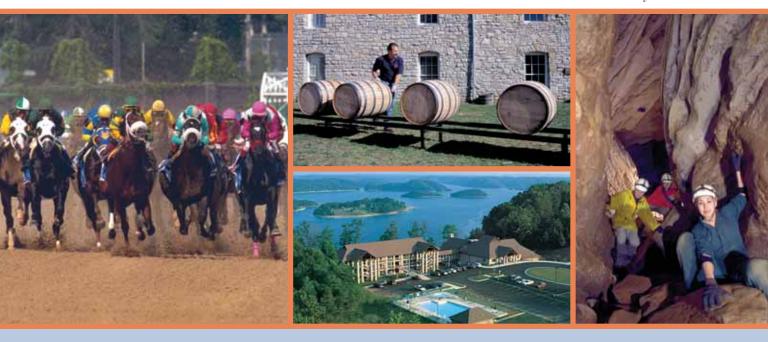


Written by Patti Nickell



t's the birthplace of bourbon and the horse capital of the world. A place where the grass is blue and the people, like the horses, have an unbridled spirit. The Commonwealth of Kentucky, with its diverse landscape, ranging from the Appalachian Mountains in the east to the lakes and river-studded peninsulas in the west, can claim many superlatives: the largest explored cave system in the world and the country's largest state resort park system; some of the country's most elite college basketball teams and the "most exciting two minutes in sports" (the Kentucky Derby).